DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 877 PS 030 295

TITLE	Affordable Housing: A Crisis for Wisconsin Families. A WisKids Count Special Report.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Inc., Madison.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	39p.
AVAILABLE FROM	WCCF, 16 North Carroll Street, Suite 600, Madison, WI 53703. Tel: 608-284-0580; Fax: 608-284-0583; Web site: http://www.wccf.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Demography; Family Financial Resources; *Housing Deficiencies; *Housing Needs; Housing Opportunities; *Low Rent Housing; Poverty; Public Housing
IDENTIFIERS	*Affordability; *Wisconsin

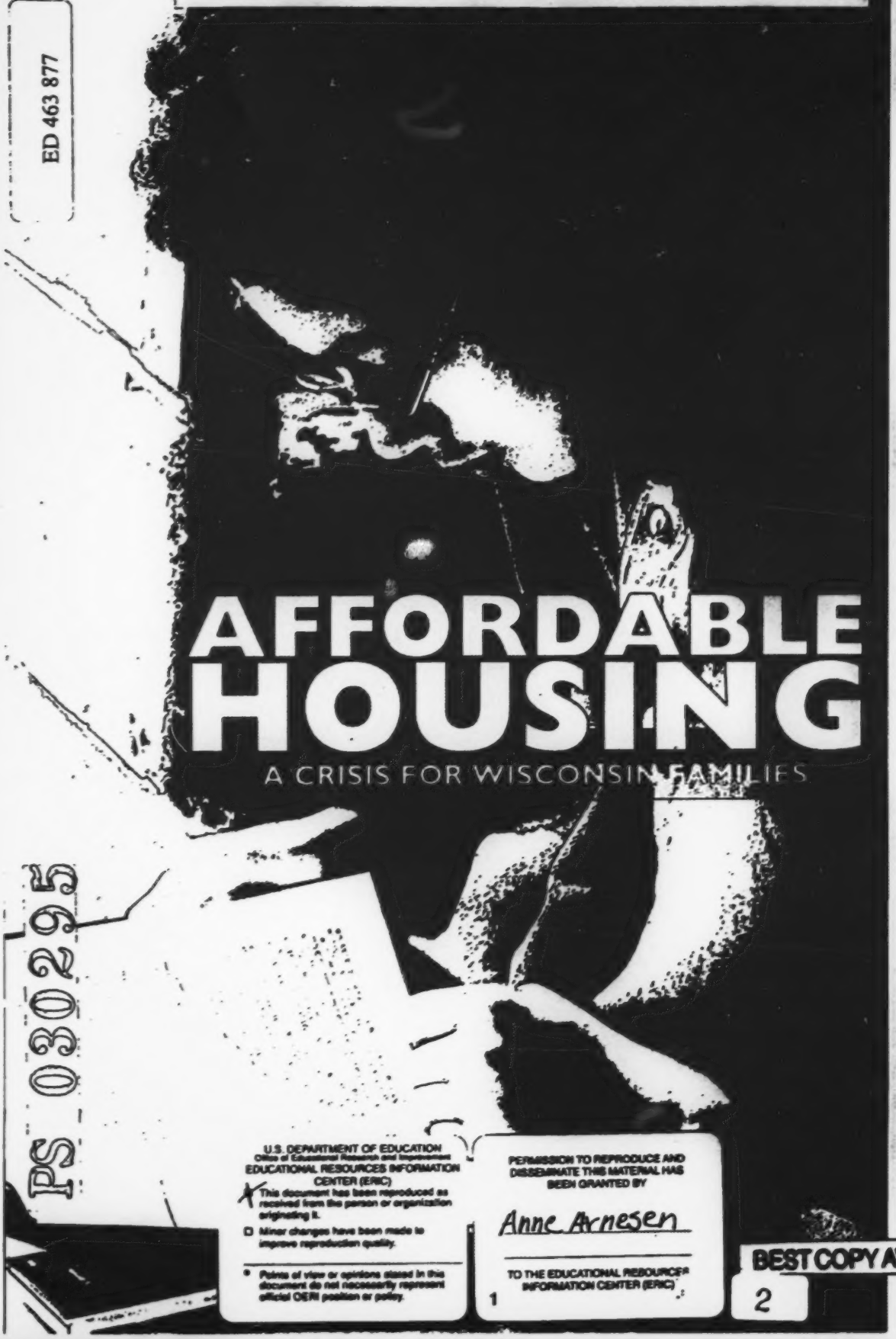
ABSTRACT

Growing up in poor quality, unsafe, and/or overcrowded housing magnifies all the other challenges and disadvantages that go along with poverty. Noting that as more and more families in Wisconsin and nationwide struggle to achieve sustainable housing, the connection between housing and child well-being is becoming increasingly obvious, this WisKids report focuses on the worsening affordable housing crunch in Wisconsin. In addition to quantitative data, the report includes four articles by experts in Wisconsin housing matters on issues related to housing quality and affordability. Following an introduction, the articles are: (1) "Big Costs, Little Paychecks: Why It's So Hard To Build Housing That's Truly Affordable" (Bill Perkins); (2) "Low-Income Housing in Wisconsin's Rural Communities, or, Country Mouse-City Mouse" (Peter Kilde); (3) "What's Wrong with Section 8 and What Can Be Done To Fix It" (Brenda Konkel); and (4) "Good Bye, Old Paint" (Martha Cranley), on the problem of childhood lead poisoning. A list of data sources concludes the report. (HTH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 463 877

A WISKIDS COUNT SPECIAL REPORT : 2002



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A CRISIS FOR WISCONSIN FAMILIES

PS 030295

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Anne Arnesen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 4

Introduction

By Robert Jacobson 5

Big Costs, Little Paychecks:

Why It's So Hard to Build Housing That's Truly Affordable

By Bill Perkins 7

Low-income Housing in Wisconsin's Rural Communities

or Country Mouse, City Mouse

By Peter Kilde 12

What's Wrong with Section 8 and What Can Be Done to Fix It

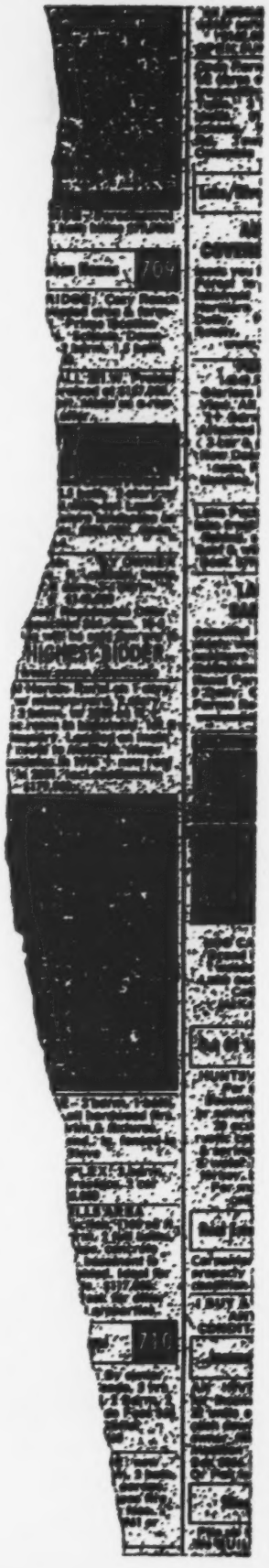
By Brenda Konkel 18

Goodbye, Old Paint

By Martha Cranley 23

Selected Data by County 32

Data Definitions and Sources 36



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WisKids Count is a project of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Inc. and is funded by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation

M. Martha Cranley, WisKids Count Coordinator

Robert Jacobson, Policy Analyst

Robert Andersen, Project Attorney

Photography: John Urban, Susan Medaris

Art Direction and Design: Michael Martin Design

Printing: Great Graphics! Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Judy Crain, President, Green Bay
Larry Hagar, Vice-President, Wausau
Jacquelyn Boggess, Secretary, Madison
Debra Suchla, Treasurer, LaCrosse
Nancy Armbrust, Green Bay
Donald Becker, Madison
Nancy Boutelle, Beloit
Tonya Brito, Madison
Missy Campion, Milwaukee
Rose Dobkoski-Smits, Green Bay
Colleen Ellingson, Milwaukee
Marcia Engen, Appleton
David Ewald, South Milwaukee
Donna Freeman, Green Bay
Gloria Johnson Powell, Madison
Robert King, Milwaukee
Kia Lee, Milwaukee
Don Maurer, Waukesha
Karl Nichols, Milwaukee
Ben Ortega, Milwaukee
Donald Ott, Pewaukee
William Perloff, Bailey's Harbor
Lon Piper, Eau Claire
Lauren Reed, Manitowoc
Joy Tapper, Milwaukee
Betsy Thomson, Beloit
Brenda Ward, Milwaukee
Marcus White, Milwaukee
Shirley Willams, Beloit

COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

Anne Arnesen, Executive Director
Nan Brien, Associate Director
Tonya Atkinson, Director, Milwaukee Office

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, INC
16 North Carroll Street, Suite 600, Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-284-0580 Fax: 608-284-0583
1442 N. Farwell, Suite 508, Milwaukee, WI 53202
Phone: 414-831-8880 Fax: 414-298-9127

Website: www.wccf.org

Copyright 2002 • All Rights Reserved
No part of this report may be reproduced without permission of The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Inc.

Introduction

BY ROBERT JACOBSON

When we published our *2000 WisKids Count Data Book* nearly two years ago, one of the issues we chose to focus on was the crisis in affordable housing. After all, it's no secret that very few things undermine a child's well-being more than an unstable or unsafe housing situation. Bad housing—especially its most extreme variation, homelessness—is directly related to, among other things, physical health problems, psychological problems and educational problems. Growing up in poor quality, unsafe, and/or overcrowded housing magnifies all the other challenges and disadvantages that go along with poverty. As more and more families in Wisconsin and nationwide struggle to achieve sustainable housing, the connection between housing and child well-being is becoming increasingly obvious. So is the urgent need to start doing more about it.

The connection between housing and child well-being is becoming increasingly obvious. So is the urgent need to start doing more about it.

Rather than publish a single large volume of *WisKids*, covering a broad range of issues and indicators as we have done in the past, this year we have chosen a different approach. For 2002 we are producing a series of five smaller *WisKids Count* data books, each focusing on a specific issue or set of issues. The first book in the series, which you are now holding, revisits the worsening affordable housing crunch. Later volumes will highlight standardized testing, children's mental health, children and gun violence, and race and poverty.

In addition to the usual array of quantitative data, Volume I of *2002 WisKids Count* includes four articles—written by experts with decades of combined experience in Wisconsin housing matters—on issues related to housing quality and affordability. As was the case with the *2000 WisKids Count Data Book*, we hope this publication will help spark the kind of dialogue essential to the eventual development of viable solutions.

The first article, *"Big Costs, Little Paychecks: Why It's So Hard to Build Housing That's Truly Affordable,"* is by Bill Perkins, executive director of the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development. Perkins demonstrates that it is virtually impossible to build housing that a low-income family can afford without somebody heavily subsidizing either the developer or the family who ends up buying or renting the unit. In short, the sum of the costs of land, construction, financing and various other fees involved in creating a unit of housing do not match up with what low-wage workers

command in today's labor market. Perkins argues that the problem can and should be addressed from both the "demand" and "supply" sides; i.e., by enhancing the ability of low-income people to pay for their housing, for example by expanding income support programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit or housing subsidies like the federal Section 8 voucher program; and by targeting greater federal resources toward the development of housing that is affordable to families at the lowest end of the income distribution, which the proposed National Housing Trust Fund could help facilitate.

In the second article, *"Country Mouse, City Mouse,"* author Peter Kilde, executive director of West Central CAP and president of WISCAP, outlines some of the unique housing problems facing low-income residents in Wisconsin's rural areas. In particular, Kilde describes the impact that the suburbanization of many traditionally urban areas is having on housing affordability in those communities. He also highlights concerns about the implications of sprawling, "big box" economic development, and sounds alarms about the declining quality of much of the state's older rural housing stock.

The third article, *"What's Wrong With Section 8?"* by Brenda Konkel, executive director of the Tenant Resource Center in Madison, provides an overview of the problems facing the federal Section 8 housing voucher program. Konkel points to poor communication by housing authorities and misunderstanding on the part of landlords as contributing factors in the failure of Section 8 to meet the needs of some communities. Problems with the program, according to Konkel, range from the inadequacy of existing Section 8 resources to landlord bias to continually shifting rules and regulations.

This batch of articles and collection of data touches only a tiny fraction of the important and emerging housing-related issues with which policymakers are, or should be, currently grappling.

And finally, WCCF's own Martha Cranley writes on the threat to Wisconsin's children of lead exposure from the state's aging housing stock. Cranley notes that dust from lead-based paint is the primary cause of lead poisoning in young children and describes the serious health implications associated with it. The article also demonstrates the high correlation between poverty and exposure to lead; what the Federal and State governments are doing to reduce this hazard; and what they could be doing to reduce it more.

This batch of articles and collection of data touches only a tiny fraction of the important and emerging housing-related issues with which policy makers are, or should be, currently grappling. The development of a broad and coherent agenda for change that addresses these and many other problems not covered in this publication is long overdue in Wisconsin. We hope this publication serves to advance that process.

Big Costs, Little Paychecks: Why It's So Hard To Build Housing That's Truly Affordable

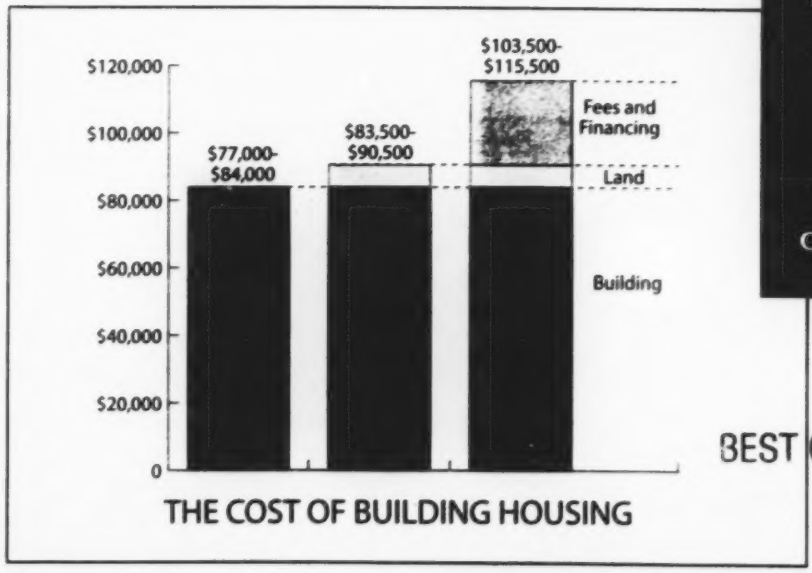
BY BILL PERKINS

Why isn't there more housing that lower-income people can afford? Because it costs more to build and maintain housing than lower-income people can pay.

What does it cost to build "affordable" housing? First, it does not cost any less than building most other housing. From time to time, housing policy-makers argue that housing for lower-income people should be built using much more modest standards than housing for other people. However, private lenders who make the loans that finance most of the cost of building the housing have a problem with that. If the owners of the housing default on their loans, the lenders have to sell the buildings to someone else in order to recover their money. And that means the housing has to be attractive to the next buyer.

So what does it cost to build any housing? For housing whose design meets standards that make lenders comfortable, building costs in Wisconsin today are about $70 per square foot of living space. A three-bedroom "housing unit" — which means a home or apartment in trade jargon — is at least

For housing whose design meets standards that make lenders comfortable, building costs in Wisconsin are about $70 per square foot of living space.



THE COST OF BUILDING HOUSING

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1,100 square feet and possibly 1,200. It costs $77,000 to $84,000 to build that unit.

Buying the land on which to put the building is a widely variable cost. As developers of affordable housing, the Wisconsin Partnership has paid as little as $6,500 per housing unit for land and as much as $35,000. The cost of the land has a lot to do with the density of development – how many homes or apartments are built on a piece of land – and where the land is located. Not surprisingly, the better the location — taking into account such factors as proximity to jobs and schools— the more expensive the land.

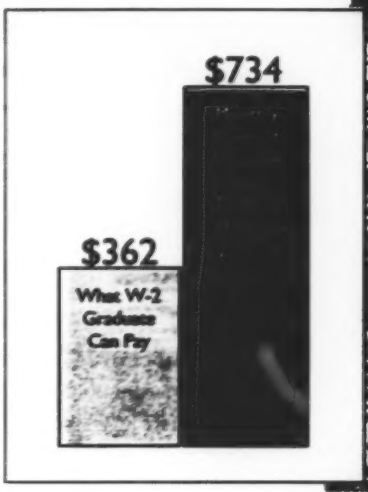
Using the lower land cost, which goes along with higher density, the building and the land together cost at least $83,500-$90,500. But building housing costs more than that. You have to pay an architect and an engineer to design the housing, and a lawyer to help negotiate with the seller of the land, the lenders and other sources of financing. You have to pay the lender interest on the money you use while you build the housing. Typically, you have to pay the local government to review and approve your site and building plans. And there are other costs like paying an appraiser and accountants. For a fairly simple development project, those costs will add at least another $20-25,000 to the cost of the land and the buildings. That brings the total cost to somewhere between $103,500 and $115,500.

Can someone who needs "affordable housing" afford to pay the monthly cost of a home or apartment that costs $100,000 to build? Let's do the math.

What if the housing units are smaller because they will be occupied by smaller households? A two-bedroom home or apartment will be about 1,000 square feet, and a one-bedroom unit will be something like 850 square feet. Using the same $70 per square foot, the building itself will cost $59,500 to $70,000 per unit. But the building cost per square foot does not stay the same as the homes or apartments get smaller; it gets more expensive. The kitchen and bathroom, which are the most expensive parts of the home on a per-square foot basis, do not get smaller just because there are fewer bedrooms. Since the kitchen and bathroom account for a bigger share of the total space, the average cost of a square foot increases.

The building costs we have discussed so far do not take into account things like hallways and stairways, garages that local government may require, or "site improvements" like sidewalks, landscaping and parking areas. Adding in those costs can bring the total cost per housing unit to perhaps $110,000 to $125,000 for a three-bedroom home or apartment. Let's say we're building housing for a mix of household sizes — some one-bedroom, some two-bedroom and some three-bedroom units. And let's say the average unit is two bedrooms. Adding up all the costs outlined above, we will have spent around $100,000 for the typical unit.

Can someone who needs "affordable housing" afford to pay the monthly cost of a home or apartment that costs $100,000 to build? Let's do the math. A recent study by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development indicated that the 58 percent of former welfare recipients who had jobs were working an average of 35 hours per week at $7.95 an hour. That's $14,469 annually. The official government standard for what people can supposedly afford to pay for housing is 30 percent of gross income, before taxes. Thirty percent of $14,469 is $4,341 annually or about $362 per month.



If I borrow $100,000 to build the housing unit where that family lives, I will have to pay the lender about $734 per month, if I repay the loan over 30 years at an 8% interest rate. But the family who needs to live there only has $362 to spend on housing. That means that if I want to build a housing unit they can afford, I have to somehow keep my costs down to about $50,000. Can I do that? I don't think so.

What can we do to make the numbers work out? Most studies of the actual rent paid by lower-income families say that many pay 40 percent or even 50 percent of their gross income. Is that good? No, but they do it anyway because they have to live somewhere. Many owners of rental property won't allow tenants into apartments that cost such a high percentage of their income, because they fear that those tenants will not be able to pay their rent consistently. Still, many lower-income renters find landlords willing to let them pay a higher percentage of their income. Suppose I'm one of them. Fifty percent of $14,469 is $7,235 annually, or about $603 per month. That's still not as much as I have to pay the bank that lent me the money to build the housing unit, but it's closer. I can do one of two things to make up the difference: I can try to figure out a way to build the home or apartment for $82,000 instead of $100,000; or I can find someone who will give me the other $18,000 of the cost of building the unit.

Most studies of the actual rent paid by lower-income families say that many pay 40% or even 50% of their gross income.

But wait. Getting local government approvals to build the housing is a lot harder if I'm also asking not to pay taxes. So even though I'm a nonprofit corporation and eligible for exemption from local property taxes as an owner of housing for lower-income families, I pay property taxes anyway. How much I pay depends on where I am. In Dane County, if the project is close to jobs, I'll probably pay something like $25 per $1,000 of property value. If the community assesses my project at full value, as it's supposed to do under state law, I'll pay $2,500 annually, or $208 per month. Actually, the lower-income family who lives in the unit has to pay the taxes, as a portion of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

rent they pay. But they don't have another $208. So since I can't expect them to pay higher rent, I have to find someone to give me yet more of the cost of building the housing itself. That way, part of the rent paid by the family can pay for the property taxes.

And there are still other costs that will have to be paid either by me as an owner of rental housing or by the tenants themselves. Heat and hot water are two of those costs. "Maintaining" the housing unit — fixing things when they break or wear out — is another. And I have to pay the people who collect the rent from the lower-income family and who arrange for the maintenance work, and all the other parts of managing housing after it's built. All of those costs can easily add another $125 or $150 per month or more to the rent I charge.

There are two basic ways to "close the gap" between what lower-income people can afford to pay for housing and what housing costs.

Between those costs and paying property taxes, the entire $362 per month rent the lower-income family can pay – based on the government's 30%-of-income standard of affordability – is all used up. That means I have to find someone to give me all of the cost of building the housing itself. If the family were to pay half of their income for rent instead of 30%, I would have some of their money to pay for the building. But because the lower-income family can't pay the whole cost, some of the money I use to pay for the building will come from the government. But the money I get from the government comes with the government's "affordability standard" attached to it. So I'm not allowed to charge the family half of their income for rent even if I wanted to.

That, in a nutshell, is why not very much housing is built for people whose annual income is $14,469. Now let's move on to what we can do about it.

There are two basic ways to "close the gap" between what lower-income people can afford to pay for housing and what housing costs. One is to increase the amount they can pay. The other is to use grants or other subsidies to pay part of the cost of producing the housing. We can't ignore the very real possibility that we can reduce what it actually costs to build housing and live in it. We have to keep working on innovations in construction materials and methods, higher standards of energy conservation, and changing attitudes toward what kind of housing best uses the money we all spend for it. But those things are not going to cut the cost of building housing in half, or make it cost nothing.

How can we change the "demand side" of the housing cost equation, as economists phrase it? That is, how can we increase the amount lower-income people can pay for housing? One obvious part of the solution could be to make it possible for them to have jobs that pay higher wages. That could mean, for example, increasing their income by passing living wage legislation, or providing easier access to the kinds of education and job training that lead to better-paying jobs. Another part of the solution

could be to pay part of their housing costs with public money. The federal government's Section 8 rental assistance program does exactly that, although most of the families who are theoretically eligible don't receive assistance because there isn't enough money appropriated. Using more of the Section 8 money for people with annual incomes as low as $15,000 would help them, but would also leave less money for people who make a little more but still can't find housing they can afford. A state-funded rental assistance program for lower-income working people would make the federal money go further.

We have to do something if we don't want to become a society in which good housing is viewed as a privilege rather than a fundamental family necessity.

Changing the "supply side" of the equation is the other half of the answer. The federal government has programs that pay for part of the cost of building housing, so that the rent paid by lower-income families doesn't have to cover the whole cost, which we already know it can't do anyway. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs do that. The Lower Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program lets private investors pay lower income taxes if they pay part of the cost of building housing for lower-income people. However, only a very small percentage of all those funds is used for housing for people who make as little as $15,000 annually, because helping those families uses up so much of the money.

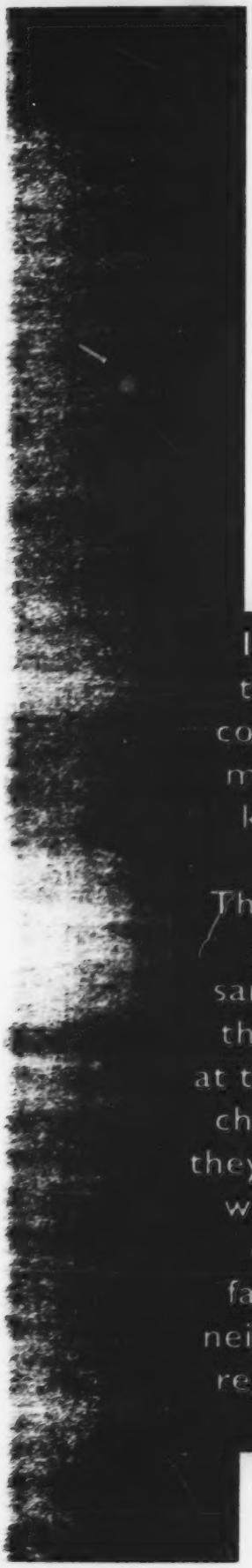
The solution to that problem? "Targeting" more of the money to those families, or creating a new housing program that will be used mostly or entirely for those families. The National Low Income Housing Coalition has proposed a new National Housing Trust Fund to do just that. There could also be a state-funded trust fund to help stimulate development of affordable housing, but the Wisconsin Supreme Court says that using state money to build housing is unconstitutional. Changing the Court's mind isn't likely, so the only real way to solve that problem would be to change the state Constitution.

We can and will debate the best way to make housing affordable to lower-income workers and their families. But there is no question that we have to do something if we don't want to become a society in which good housing is viewed as a privilege rather than a fundamental family necessity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mr. Perkins is the executive director of the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Low-income Housing in Wisconsin's Rural Communities
or
Country Mouse – City Mouse

BY PETER KILDE

Wisconsin's rural communities all have something in common; they are all unique. Each community has a history, environment, economic base, culture and plans for the future that impact low-income housing in ways that are unique to that town, village, or rural neighborhood. At the same time, enough similarities exist across rural Wisconsin and its low income housing needs to generate a broad and comprehensible picture as we move forward in the development of good public policies and practices to ensure that all of Wisconsin's residents have access to safe, sanitary, affordable housing.

In many of these rural communities, most people know each other. Their children go to the same schools, they worship at the same few churches, and they do business with friends, extended families and neighbors on a regular basis.

It may be helpful to start with a general overview of the rural community environment, drawn primarily from personal observation over several decades of living in a variety rural Wisconsin settings. While mindful of each community's distinctions, there are a few qualities shared by Wisconsin's rural neighborhoods and smaller towns that are not shared by our urban areas. In many of these rural communities, most people know each other. Their children go to the same schools, they worship at the same few churches, and they do business with friends, extended families and neighbors on a regular basis. A generous tendency to help neighbors in need can be coupled with a tendency toward judgementalism and, well, nosiness. Historically stable, conservative, homogenous and self-reliant, rural communities can be slow to embrace newcomers, changes, outside experts, and people of distinctly different cultures and religions.

I also suggest four notable overlays that impact and modify these generalities. The first overlay is the popular and predominantly urban media culture of celebrities, music, franchises and professional sports that has come into virtually every home through televisions and computers. While an arguably more inclusive and tolerant

culture, it can also have the effect of isolating its following and weakening the traditional ties that hold neighborhoods and communities together.

The second overlay is the influx into many areas of rural Wisconsin of affluent retirees, professionals and skilled workers who commute daily from these once small, traditional communities to jobs in urban and, increasingly, suburban areas. Expanding rapidly outward from Wisconsin's urban areas and from Minneapolis/St. Paul into west-central Wisconsin, this upscale development has dramatically increased land values and property taxes, making it difficult for the existing housing stock to remain affordable and for new affordable housing to be constructed. The impact of this phenomenon is very evident in my home county of St. Croix. St. Croix County shares the state's highest estimated median family income, $75,400, with Pierce County, its immediate neighbor to the south. St. Croix is also one of the fastest-growing counties in Wisconsin, with a 33 percent population increase between 1990 and 2000. And contrary to the popular myth that such affluent development lowers property taxes by "spreading the pain" among more taxpayers, the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance reports that for 2002, St. Croix County property taxes increased by 20.3 percent over the 2001 levy, the fourth greatest increase in the state. Yet St. Croix County is essentially rural; its largest community, Hudson, has a population of only 9,150.

What all this means for affordable rental housing is captured in the National Low Income Housing Coalition's report on the nation's growing wage-rent disparity, *Out of Reach, 2001*.

What all this means for affordable rental housing is captured in the National Low Income Housing Coalition's report on the nation's growing wage-rent disparity, *Out of Reach 2001*. The report notes that in St. Croix County, an extremely low-income household — meaning a household earning 30 percent of the area median income — can afford to pay $566 per month in rent, using the conventional "30 percent of income" standard of affordability. But fair market rent for a two bedroom unit is $862. The full-time hourly wage required to afford that fair market rent, called the "housing wage," is $16.58, which is 22.7 percent higher than it was just a year earlier. This in a county where a typical hourly wage for low-income people is in the neighborhood of $9.14, which is the average among the county's W-2 participants.

By way of contrast, in Sawyer County, just one county over from St. Croix County, an extremely low income household earning 30 percent of the Area Median Income of $36,300 can afford monthly rent of no more than $272, while the Fair Market Rent for a two bedroom unit is $432. The 2001 housing wage in Sawyer County was $8.31, an increase of just 4.1 percent over the previous year.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

While a tough situation in both cases, a low-income or fixed-income family looking for rental housing in St. Croix County has a much more daunting challenge in the midst of the prevailing affluence than families in Sawyer County, where there is much less income disparity.

Another perspective comes from a September 2001 study, St. Croix Valley: Survey of Residents, conducted by the Wilder Research Center under commission from the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation. This extensive study covered three Wisconsin and two Minnesota counties bordering the St. Croix River, and found that 54 percent of households earning less than $25,000 per year spent more than 35 percent of their income on housing. The same study also revealed that 22 percent of St. Croix County renters and only 6 percent of Pierce County renters received rent subsidies.

To put it bluntly, affluent people generally don't want low-income housing in their neighborhoods, and sometimes not even in their communities.

There is also a political/social dimension to the affordable housing challenge in affluent areas. To put it bluntly, affluent people generally don't want low-income housing in their neighborhoods, and sometimes not even in their communities. While the traditional rural towns and villages have always recognized the need for low-income families to have a place to live in the community, affluent newcomers without that rural community experience and understanding are often less appreciative of economic diversity. Even Habitat for Humanity, with its great reputation for building quality, well-maintained housing, has been unable to "break into" Hudson, River Falls or New Richmond, the three most affluent communities in St. Croix and Pierce counties. Yet they have been quite successful in getting widespread community support, and houses built, in the area's less affluent communities.

The third overlay is rapid change. The impact of big box franchise retail, factory farming, Internet commerce, cheap gas, refugee resettlement and globalization have dramatically changed the economic face of many rural communities. They have changed the human face too. The small west-central Wisconsin town of Barron, population 3,200, looked pretty much like any other town of mostly northern European descent just a couple of years ago. Today the population is 12 percent Somali. In other communities, migrant Hispanic agricultural jobs are becoming year-round food processing factory and confinement dairy farm jobs, and the workers are bringing in their families and looking for permanent housing. A generation of Hmong has grown up not as refugees, but as American and Wisconsin citizens.

The fourth and final overlay is the link between transportation and the affordability and availability of housing. It works like this: as one gets closer to economic centers and good job markets, the housing gets more expensive and less available. The converse is also true—as one gets farther from economic centers and good job markets, the housing becomes more affordable and available to low-income families. And even in the best job markets, many of the jobs pay well below the housing wage noted above. So

there is often a lot of territory between even low wage jobs and the low cost housing these jobs can support, just as there is a lot of space between everything else in rural areas. Transportation plays a very big role in contemporary rural life. In rural Wisconsin, the only practical form of transportation is the personal car, a fact illustrated by the Wilder study and others showing that 97 to 98 percent of working families in this part of the country rely on personal cars for almost all local transportation. For low-income families, affordable cars mean older cars. The farther you have to drive them to get from your low-paying job to your affordable house, the more gas they use and the more likely they are to break down and become expensive older cars. And the more likely they are to fail to get you to your day care, the doctor, the laundromat, the grocery store (which is probably no longer located in your small town), and to the job you just lost because your unreliable car made you an unreliable worker, and to the case worker across the county you now have to see in order to get food stamps and W-2 case management services. This double bind is common to low-income families. You need a reliable car to get a good job. You need a good job to get a reliable car. But if you don't have a reliable car in rural Wisconsin and employment is your primary income, you are in a deep, deep rut.

With this overview of rural Wisconsin communities for a backdrop, there are a number of issues related to the housing stock. According to the Wisconsin 2000 Consolidated Plan for the State's Housing and Economic Development Needs, the majority of Wisconsin's housing stock is over forty years old. For some rural counties, nearly half of the housing stock was built before 1949. While a well-maintained older home can provide very good housing, it is the more dilapidated structures that are the most likely to end up housing low-income families who can least afford the even greater maintenance they require. And the downward spiral so familiar to these low-income families is repeated. Many older houses, especially those poorly maintained, are also more expensive to heat, draining the family's meager financial resources even further.

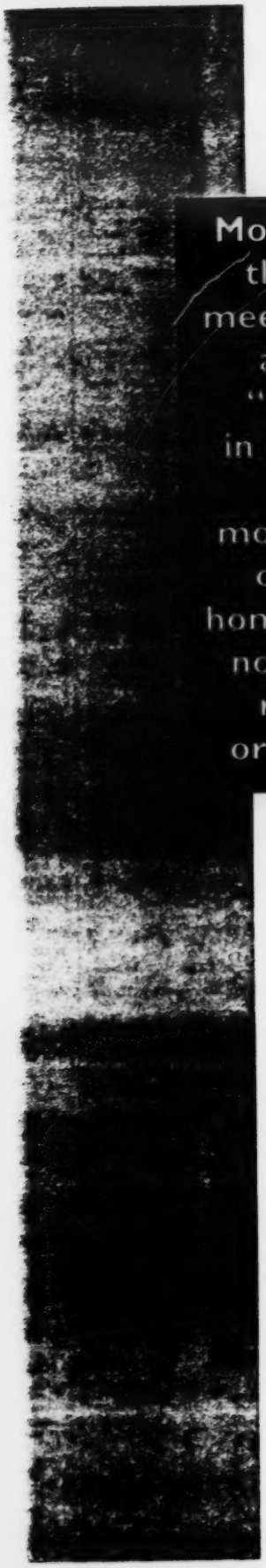
In the countryside, the poor condition of water and septic systems in many older homes raises serious sanitation and health concerns.

The quality of the older housing stock when originally constructed is also a concern in many of Wisconsin's rural areas. In regions where the agricultural economy has always been weak due to poor soils, short growing seasons, or small tillable acreages between wetlands or steep hillsides, the original construction was often done on the cheap by variably-skilled builder-occupants. Substandard and unconventional building practices make many of these houses harder to weatherize, preserve or rehabilitate. In the countryside, the poor condition of water and septic systems in many older homes raises serious sanitation and health concerns.

Lead hazard is another significant health and safety issue facing low-income families with older homes

15

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



in rural Wisconsin. In the public mind, lead hazard is often thought of as an urban issue, conjuring up images of peeling paint in inner city tenements. Yet as the state consolidated plan again points out, "In one third of rural Wisconsin counties, at least 70 percent of homes built prior to 1978 have lead-based paint." Lead abatement measures are very technical and expensive and well beyond the means of folks struggling to get by. While Wisconsin does have lead abatement programs, the consolidated plan makes this chilling observation that "the majority of dwelling units where lead-poisoned children live are not repaired under the current system of service delivery and regulatory enforcement." And the exposure is greater in homes where less attention is paid to maintenance, which is of course directly related to poverty.

Mobile homes that fail to meet standards are often "dumped" in rural areas where mobile homes or mobile home parks are not seriously regulated or inspected.

Finally, the whole cluster of issues surrounding aging mobile homes is a major challenge to the provision of safe, sanitary, affordable housing in our rural communities. Worthy of its own major study, this is a rural low-income housing issue because mobile homes and trailer parks are generally restricted or more thoroughly regulated in urban areas. Mobile homes that fail to meet standards are often "dumped" in rural areas where mobile homes or mobile home parks are not seriously regulated or inspected. While it is certainly true that a well-built, well-maintained, newer mobile home can provide very suitable and reasonably affordable housing, poorly-built, poorly-maintained, older mobile homes arguably represent the very worst housing in the state. And we have a lot of it. According to the Wisconsin 2000 – 2001 Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) database, 13 percent of Wisconsin's non-Milwaukee County residents receiving energy assistance payments last year were living in mobile homes. To underscore the distinctly rural character of this issue, the same data base reports that of the 38,182 Milwaukee County households receiving energy assistance, only 152 were living in mobile homes. In west-central and northwestern Wisconsin, fully one-fourth of the low-income houses receiving state weatherization services are mobile homes. Deteriorating mobile homes can pose fire, windstorm and sanitation hazards, and are high energy users to boot. Yet mobile homes continue to be the fastest growing form of low-income housing in America. In rural Wisconsin, older mobile homes are often the only housing option available to low-income families.

While the picture can be pretty bleak, there are some hopeful signs and helpful new and existing programs and policies that address these housing challenges. Wisconsin's Smart Growth legislation calls for the incorporation of affordable housing in all land use plans, prevailing affluence notwithstanding. The Low-Income Public Benefits program aggressively tackles the weatherization of Wisconsin's low-income homes and ultimately saves everyone the expense of heating the great outdoors in a cold Wisconsin winter. State and Federal legislation supporting lead hazard reduction is beginning to make

our older homes safer, especially for small children. Recent increases in the allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, steady increases in grant funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago's Affordable Housing Program, the state-administered federal HOME program, WHEDA Home and Multifamily Housing programs, USDA Rural Development and other state and federal programs are all working to increase the stock of safe, sanitary, affordable housing in both rural and urban Wisconsin.

But effective public policies addressing the problems inherent in run down mobile homes and poorly managed mobile home parks need to be developed. A good start might be to require that used mobile homes have a safety inspection and necessary repairs made before they can be sold by dealerships, in much the same manner as the state now requires for used cars.

And speaking of cars, there is a great need for a public transportation policy that recognizes that America's transportation policy for 50 years has been based on the assumption that everyone has a car. Yet virtually all state and federal low-income transportation funding is targeted to mass transit, which by and large cannot meet the needs of low-income working and single-parent families any more than it meets the needs of our middle income working families. In rural Wisconsin, affordable housing and car-based transportation are joined at the hip; yet funding for effective car-based transportation programs is woefully lacking.

All the programs providing funding for affordable housing need to open up to greater flexibility, creativity, local control and decision making, and changes over the life of the funded activity.

Finally, as Wisconsin's rural communities are changed by the many forces noted above, all the programs providing funding for affordable housing need to open up to greater flexibility, creativity, local control and decision-making, and changes over the life of the funded activity. HUD Fair Market Rents, for example, are averaged over an entire county, and fail to capture the reality of great differences within many of our rural counties. And in poorer counties, these rent limits make it very difficult to develop and sustain new low and moderate-income housing in areas where it is most needed. A Low Income Housing Tax Credit alternative or variation with much lower fixed costs is also needed in order to make it feasible to develop small projects for small communities.

Wisconsin has a proud tradition of caring for its people, and access to housing is one of the most fundamental needs that must be fulfilled. It is crucial that we continue seeking ways to make Wisconsin work even better for all of its residents, including the low-income families in our rural communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mr. Kilde is the executive director of West Central CAP and President of WISCAP.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What's Wrong with Section 8 and What Can be Done to Fix It

BY BRENDA KONKEL

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 housing subsidy program was initially intended to halt the concentration of low-income people in public housing. Traditional public housing creates specific segregated buildings where low-income people are forced to live if they want rental assistance. The Section 8 program's goal was to allow low-income people to rent in the open market and provide them with opportunities to be integrated into the community. The program works by providing the tenant with a voucher which they present to a private landlord. The tenant pays up to 40% of their income towards rent and the local housing authority makes the remaining payment. The payment is calculated based on the local rental market and the tenant's expenses. The landlord in return agrees to have an inspection to make sure the apartment meets minimal requirements, and signs a one-year lease initially.

The Section 8 program's goal was to allow low-income people to rent in the open market and provide them with opportunities to be integrated into the community.

The problems with the Section 8 program can vary from community to community, but there are some universal issues that all Section 8 tenants, housing authorities and landlords who participate in the program face. Additionally, in some communities the program has suffered from lack of political support from local elected officials, poor administration of the program by local housing authorities, and misinformation and misunderstanding on the part of landlords and the groups who represent their interests.

ISSUES WITH THE HUD PROGRAM

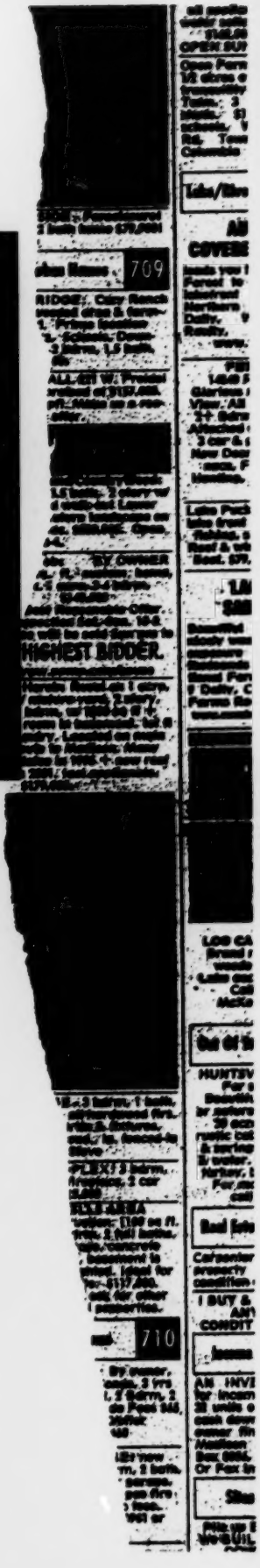
Tenant Issues

The obvious problem in most communities is that there is not enough housing assistance to meet the needs in the community. Waiting lists are common and vary from weeks to years in length. The major problem with waiting lists is that tenants are often purged from the list when the housing authority loses contact with them. This happens all too frequently, since tenants who need housing assistance but are not yet receiving any tend to move often, which naturally increases the likelihood that the housing authority will lose track of them.

Another problem in many markets is a shortage of landlord participation. In some communities, as many as 75 percent of the landlords do not accept Section 8 tenants. Landlords choose not to participate for many different reasons, but the result is the same: severely limited options for the tenants who have to find housing. Tenants are required to find housing within 60 days. They may get an extension after that, but after 120 days extensions can be extremely difficult to obtain. This particular problem is compounded by another issue: many landlords require tenants to sign one-year leases, but tenants who get to the top of the waiting lists are often already locked into their current leases. If their current landlord does not take Section 8, they need to either give up their Section 8 certificate or break their current lease, which can lead to bad landlord references and greater difficulty finding another landlord willing to rent to them in the future.

In some communities, as many as 75 percent of the landlords do not accept Section 8 tenants.

The federal standards for calculating how much assistance a tenant can receive limits options. Tenants are not allowed spend more than 40 percent of their income towards rent, but that amount combined with the Federally-calculated assistance often adds up to a sum that is inadequate for all but a tiny fraction of available units in the private market. For a tenant with a disability seeking an accessible apartment all of these problems are magnified. Tenants with criminal backgrounds may have difficulty getting Section 8 in the first place.



Landlord Issues

Up until recently, the major landlord opposition to the Section 8 program was related to the "lease in perpetuity" (or "endless lease") and the "take one/take all" provisions in the lease. An additional issue for landlords is that the housing authorities no longer pay for security deposits and damages that may occur. The lease in perpetuity provision used to say that a landlord could only stop renting to a tenant for "good cause." This provision is no longer in effect, but many landlords are not aware that it has changed, and they continue to use it as a reason not to rent to Section 8 tenants. Currently, the landlord is required to sign a one year lease for the first year of rental, and then the tenant and landlord can choose to go to a month-to-month lease if both parties agree.

Another extinct provision landlords objected to was the "take one/take all" provision. This provision was misunderstood from the beginning. Many landlords believed that if they accepted one Section 8 tenant, that they had to take all Section 8 tenants who applied. In fact, the provision merely said that if a landlord CONSIDERED the application of one Section 8 tenant, then they had to CONSIDER all Section 8 tenants. Each tenant could still be screened by the landlord in all the normal ways other tenants were screened. This provision has also been removed, though many landlords continue to act on the belief

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

that it still exists.

Finally, around the same time the above provisions were changed, HUD also changed its practice of reimbursing landlords for damages that occur while Section 8 tenants are in their units. The landlord is now required to collect that money directly from the tenant. Many landlords object because a large percentage of Section 8 tenants are significantly below the poverty line and are therefore "uncollectible," meaning their wages and assets cannot be garnished.

Finally, many landlords continue to object to the program because they don't want to sign the HUD lease or be subject to rules that HUD may change during the lease period. Some landlords are also hesitant to let housing authority building inspectors in to inspect the unit, and many do not want to make the repairs that are required in order to rent to a Section 8 tenant. In some areas, housing authorities have problems getting checks to the landlords promptly and completing the initial paperwork in time for tenants to move in and make payments to the landlord in a timely manner.

Some landlords are also hesitant to let housing authority building inspectors in to inspect the unit, and many do not want to make the repairs that are required in order to rent to a Section 8 tenant.

In addition to the issues listed above, there is anecdotal evidence that many landlords believe that tenants who receive Section 8 are "bad tenants". Testimony in Madison at public hearings has often indicated that landlords assumed that these tenants were more likely to be criminals, damage the property and skip without paying rent. There is no evidence to suggest that any of this is true. Landlords are allowed to screen Section 8 tenants just like any other tenant and may, in fact, screen out tenants with a history of these qualities and practices.

Many of the low-income tenants may, in fact, have poor credit ratings or a history of missed rent payments, but landlords can develop criteria that take into account that the tenant's rent burden will be eased by Section 8. Once the program is in place, landlords can expect prompt payments of portions—sometimes quite large portions—of the tenant's rent from the housing authority. With this assistance, tenants are often able to catch up on bills they are behind on and are more able to deal with crises that arise.

Housing Authority Issues

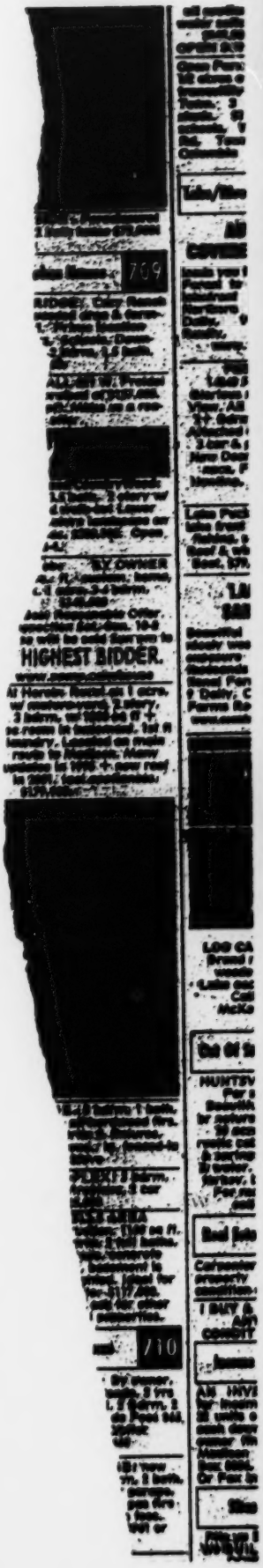
Housing authorities also have issues with the program. The lack of administrative dollars available and constantly changing rules make Section 8 difficult to administer, and make it even harder for them to engage in the necessary outreach to landlords.

20

CASE STUDY: MADISON AND DANE COUNTY

Madison and Dane County local elected officials have been discussing the problems with the Section 8 program since February 1998. The City of Madison had not applied for more Section 8 certificates for several years and had no intention of applying for them because of a perceived risk of having too many low-income tenants concentrated in the City of Madison. The housing authorities had relatively poor reputations with landlords, and were not engaging in outreach to get new landlords to participate in the program. Many of the tenants receiving Section 8 were being forced to rent from a handful of landlords in relatively poor neighborhoods that had significant problems. According to the local apartment association, over 75 percent of landlords were unwilling to rent to Section 8 tenants, which increased the concentration of Section 8 tenants in these neighborhoods, and in turn increased the perception that Section 8 tenants were the cause of the neighborhoods' problems.

In response to this concentration, ordinances were introduced at both the city and county local governments that would require landlords to consider Section 8 tenants. These ordinances were met with tremendous opposition from area landlords. Much of this opposition generated further dissemination of the myths about Section 8 tenants and the Section 8 program that led to the problem in the first place. Compromise proved elusive. The ordinances failed at both the city and county levels when tied votes were decided in favor of the landlords' position by the mayor and county board chair respectively.



WHAT CAN AND IS BEING DONE?

None of the problems with Section 8 outlined here are insurmountable, but the barriers to improvement are substantial. Ordinances prohibiting landlords from discriminating against tenants solely on the basis of their possession of a Section 8 voucher continue to receive consideration, but they face vigorous ongoing opposition from landlord groups. Housing authorities can learn to do a better job of reaching out to landlords, and cities can work harder to ensure that the housing options available to low-income renters are as geographically diverse as possible.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

21

The fundamental problem is that there is simply not enough housing available at prices affordable to the neediest individuals and families in most communities. It is a complex problem with no single perfect solution. Nevertheless, the Section 8 program remains one of the best tools we have to address the problem. We must continue working to make it the most effective tool it can be.

The fundamental problem is that there is simply not enough housing available at prices affordable to the neediest individuals and families in most communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ms. Konkel is the executive director of the Tenant Resource Center in Madison.

SOME FACTS:

- In Wisconsin, an extremely low income household can afford monthly rent of no more than $444, while the Fair Market rent for a two bedroom unit is $586.
- A minimum wage earner (earning $5.15 per hour) can afford monthly rent of no more than $268.
- In Wisconsin, 35% of renter households pay more than 30% of their income for rent.

Source: *"Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity"*, National Low Income Housing Coalition

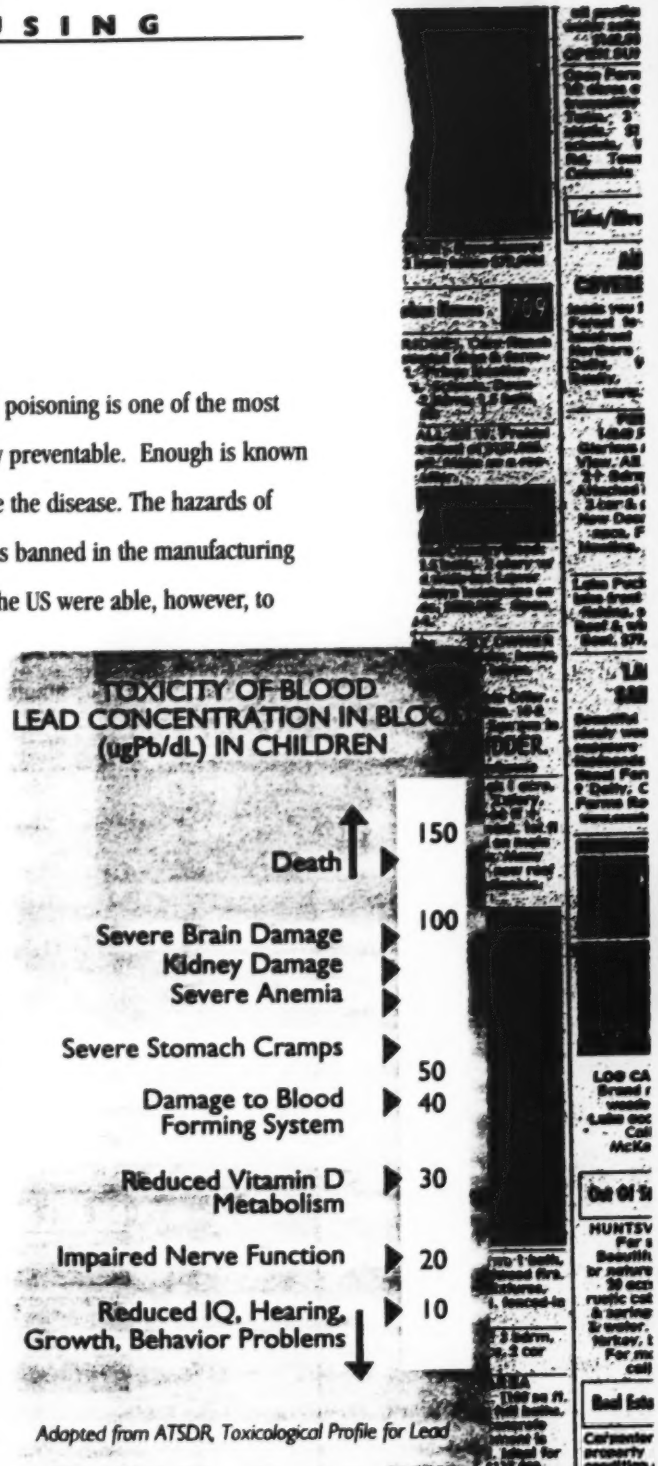
Goodbye, Old Paint

BY MARTHA CRANLEY

According to the Center for Disease Control, childhood lead poisoning is one of the most common pediatric health problems in the United States and it is entirely preventable. Enough is known about the sources of lead and effective eradication methods to eliminate the disease. The hazards of lead-based paint have been known since the early 1900s, when lead was banned in the manufacturing of paint in Australia. The lead mining and paint pigment industries in the US were able, however, to forestall a ban on lead paint until 1978.[1]

Sources of Lead

Lead exposure among young children has been dramatically reduced over the last two decades because lead has been gradually eliminated from gasoline, food and beverage cans, and new house paint. In addition, contaminated drinking water, hazardous waste sites and industrial emissions have been reduced. According to the Center for Disease Control, the average blood lead level in children has declined more than 80 percent since the mid-1970s. In 1978 there were about 14.8 million poisoned children in the United States. By the early 1990's, that number had declined to 890,000 children.[2] Exposure to lead-contaminated dust from lead-based paint in older homes is now the primary cause of lead poisoning in young children.



Adopted from ATSDR, Toxicological Profile for Lead

Most commonly, children are poisoned by paint dust in poorly maintained older homes. In fewer cases, children are poisoned by lead paint dust that is produced in repainting and remodeling projects that disrupt old painted surfaces without proper safeguards to control and clean-up lead dust. Housing age is an important predictor of risk. Lead content in paint has decreased over the past century from highs of 50 percent lead content in the 1940s to no lead as a result of the 1978 ban on lead in paint used for homes. However, the older the building, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint. Studies indicate that homes built before 1950 are more likely to pose a health hazard to small children. Nationally, about 74 percent of privately owned and occupied housing built before 1980 contain lead-based paint. In 1990,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

23

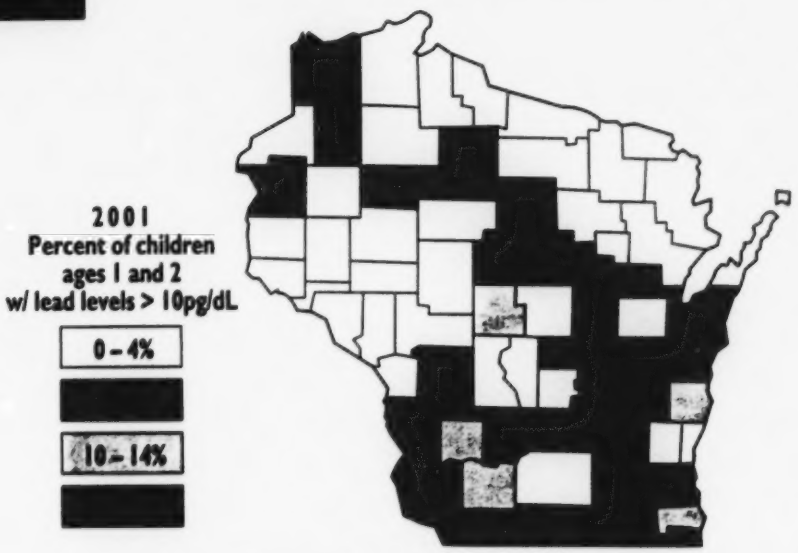
Lead is most harmful to children under age six because it is easily absorbed into their growing bodies and interferes with the developing brain and other organs and systems.

the Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated that about 3.8 million homes with young children have either deteriorating lead-based paint or high levels of lead dust. In Wisconsin, 37 percent of current housing stock was built prior to 1950 and 84 percent was built before 1980. Children who live in rehabilitated lead-free housing or who return to lead-reduced housing after undergoing medical treatment have significantly lower blood lead levels than children living in similar, non-rehabilitated housing. Deleading or lead paint abatement, when done properly, can be an effective method of reducing children's exposure to dangerous levels of lead in paint and house dust.[3]

Children as Lead Detectors

Lead has no known value to the human body. Poisoning occurs when the amount of lead in a person's bloodstream is too high. Blood lead levels are measured in micrograms per deciliter, or µg/dL. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that a blood lead level of 10µg/dL is a level of concern. Nationally, nearly 1 million children are lead poisoned.[4]

LEAD LEVELS IN WISCONSIN - 2001



Source: Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lead is most harmful to children under age six because it is easily absorbed into their growing bodies and interferes with the developing brain and other organs and systems. Very young children are more

at risk for lead exposure than older children and adults because their normal developmental activities of crawling, walking, hand-to-mouth activities and exploring their world expose them to lead dust on floors, toys and on window sills. Pregnant women are also at increased risk as lead ingested by the mother can cross the placenta and affect the unborn fetus increasing the risk of miscarriages, low birth weight babies, stillbirths and underdeveloped babies.[5]

An amount of lead the size of three granules of sugar if ingested daily is enough to poison a child.

In children, at very high levels of exposure, lead poisoning can cause mental retardation, coma, convulsions and even death. However, more commonly, in the US, children are poisoned through chronic low-level exposure. This low level exposure can cause reduced IQ and attention span, hyperactivity, impaired growth, reading and learning disabilities, hearing loss, insomnia, and a range of other health, intellectual and behavioral effects. *The State Medical Journal* reports that lead poisoning is a disease that most often does not dissipate quickly, but persists as the child grows older.[6]

Studies indicate that increased blood lead levels have been linked to social withdrawal, increased aggression, higher involvement in crime and unwed pregnancy. In addition, a history of elevated lead levels has been found among juveniles and adults incarcerated in the nation's prison system.

Analysis of statewide blood level data show that while the onset of lead poisoning may be acute or chronic, it may take a typical child more than two years to recover.

For the most part, lead poisoning is silent; most poisoned children have no symptoms. The vast majority of cases, therefore, go undiagnosed and untreated. A blood test is the only way to know for certain if a child is poisoned. In 2001, only 20 percent (79,291) of Wisconsin children under age six were tested for possible lead poisoning. Yet, the overall rate of children with lead blood levels in excess of 10ug/dL in the state was 7.3 percent – almost twice the nationwide rate of four percent. While the federal and state Medicaid Programs require all children to be screened for lead poisoning, in 2001 less than half of one and two-year-olds were tested. For children who are not recipients of MA, the Department of Health and Family Services recommends blood tests at 12 and 24 months for children who live in or frequently visit homes built before 1950 and children who live in or frequently visit a home built before 1978 that is undergoing renovation or remodeling. In addition, the department recommends that children, who meet these criteria and live in Milwaukee or Racine, should be tested again at three, four and five years of age.[7] Finally, Wisconsin state statutes require all individual and group health insurance plans to cover screening for possible lead poisoning.[8]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In 2001, minority children made up over 70 percent of the children who tested positive for lead poisoning.

WISCONSIN CHILDREN TESTED IN 2001

MA Status	Age	Tested	%>10ug/dL
MA	<6	46,577	7.7%
MA	1 and 2	25,201	10.5%
Non-MA	<6	32,714	2.6%
Non-MA	1 and 2	19,634	3.7%
WIC	<6	67,845	12.30%
WIC	1 and 2	26,243	8.20%

Data Source: Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

While lead poisoning crosses all socioeconomic, geographic and racial boundaries, the burden falls disproportionately on low-income families and families of color. In the United States, children from poor families are eight times more likely to be poisoned than those from higher income families.

2001 ELEVATED BLOOD LEVELS IN WISCONSIN

Race	Age 1 (%>10ug/dL)	Age 2 (%>10ug/dL)	Age <6 (%>10ug/dL)
Asian	9.8%	12.9%	9.2%
Black	19.3%	28.8%	20%
Hispanic	9.9%	13%	8.8%
White	4.1%	5.5%	3.6%
Unknown	3.2%	4.5%	2.8%

Data Source: Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

A report by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) found that 77 percent of children with elevated blood lead levels were enrolled in one or more low-income programs.[9] In Wisconsin, children under six years old enrolled in Medicaid and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, constitute about one half of the children tested. However, they comprise the majority of the children poisoned (80 percent and 60 percent, respectively). Of one and two year-old-children (the highest risk age group) who receive Medicaid benefits, 10.5 percent have blood lead levels higher than 10ug/dL, compared to 3.7 percent of children not receiving Medicaid. In 2001, more than 52 percent of children under six in the WIC program were screened for lead poisoning with 12.3 percent having lead levels of 10ug/dL or higher. In Milwaukee County, over 19 percent of the one and two-year-olds receiving Medicaid, who were tested, had blood levels above 10ug/dL. Nationally, African American children are five times more likely to be poisoned than white children. In Wisconsin, the numbers are just as grim. In 2001, minority children made up over 70 percent of the children who tested positive for lead poisoning.[10]

Effects of lead poisoning on adults:

Although children and pregnant women are at the greatest risk for lead poisoning, adults are also vulnerable. At the highest risk are adults who work around lead in their jobs or hobbies. In general, adults poisoned by lead may suffer from high blood pressure or hypertension, memory and concentration problems, sterility/impotence in males, wrist drop, nervous system disorders, muscle and joint pain, headaches, irritability.[11]

Wisconsin Lead Poisoning Prevention

Under current law, it is illegal to apply "lead bearing paint" (see side bar) to:

(a) any exposed surface on the inside of a dwelling;

(b) the exposed surface of a structure used for the care of children; or

(c) any fixture or other object placed in or upon any exposed surface of a dwelling and ordinarily accessible to children.

A "dwelling" means any structure, all or part of which is designed for human habitation.

To support local efforts at lead poisoning prevention and lead hazard resolution, Wisconsin receives funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Center for Disease Control. For 2001-2003, the Department of Health and Family Services budget for lead poisoning or lead exposure services is $1,004,100 per year. Under 254.151 of the statutes, this money is to be used by the department to fund (1) educational programs, (2) lead poisoning or lead exposure screening, care coordination and follow-up services, (3) administration and enforcement of delegation of enforcement to local health departments, (4) outreach development and implementation, and (5) community based human service agencies that provide primary health care, health education and social services to low-income people in Milwaukee.

Lead "Free"

means a dwelling that contains no lead bearing paint. "Lead bearing paint" means any paint that contains more than .06% lead by weight or more than .7 milligram of lead per square centimeter in the dried film of applied paint.

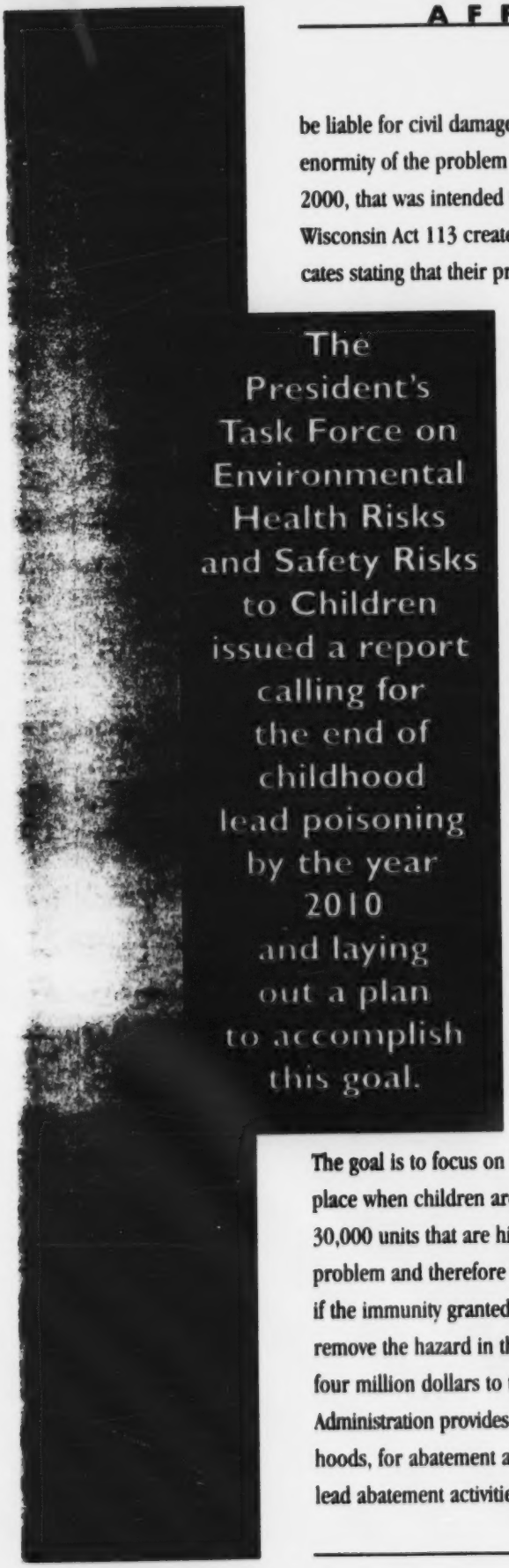
Lead "Safe"

means that there are no "lead bearing paint hazards" affecting the dwelling. A "lead bearing paint hazard" means any condition that causes exposure to lead from dust lead, soil lead, deteriorated paint that is not proven to be lead free, or lead based paint that is present on friction surfaces, impact surfaces, or surfaces that are chewed or mouthed, as observed or evidenced by teeth marks and would result in adverse human health effects."

As a part of hazard resolution, local health departments inspect homes to identify violations. Health officers notify owners and occupants of violations, who are given 30 days to abate or remove the hazard. The department or local inspectors may report violations of lead hazard laws to the district attorney. Civil forfeitures of $100 to $1000 may be ordered and criminal penalties of $100 to $5,000 and two years of probation may be ordered. In 1999, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that, landlords may

27 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

be liable for civil damages for any person who is injured by lead poisoning. However, because of the enormity of the problem and the difficulty with enforcement, the legislature enacted a new law in May 2000, that was intended to help property owners rid their properties of lead paint hazards. 1999 Wisconsin Act 113 created immunity for property owners of residential properties who obtain certificates stating that their properties are either lead free or lead safe.



The President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children issued a report calling for the end of childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010 and laying out a plan to accomplish this goal.

The new law directed the Department of Health and Family Services to develop administrative rules governing the issuance of lead free or lead safe certificates to properties. The rules allow immunity for a limited period of time for landlords whose property is either completely free of lead paint or whose property is safe enough that existing lead paint will not yield dust or chips endangering children's safety. The rules also address the certifications that property owners must obtain whenever they engage in repairs or remodeling that may disturb lead paint in their rental units. Finally, Act 113 directs the creation of a registry of dwellings that have been issued lead free and lead safe certificates.[12] The idea behind the legislation and the administrative rules is that by granting property owners a process through which they may gain immunity, more property owners will engage in activities to reduce lead paint hazards in residential rental properties.

What more can be done?

In February 2000, The President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children issued a report calling for the end of childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010 and laying out a plan to accomplish this goal. Briefly, the plan contains four essential recommendations:[13]

Act before children are poisoned –

The goal is to focus on housing-based primary prevention strategies. True prevention can only take place when children are able to move into a safe home. In Milwaukee alone, there are an estimated 30,000 units that are high risk for children. These may be units whose owners have the largest lead problem and therefore potentially the largest cost in eliminating the lead hazard. It remains to be seen if the immunity granted under Act 113 will entice these landlords to spend the money necessary to remove the hazard in their properties. For 2000-2002, HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control awarded four million dollars to the state to reduce lead paint based hazards. With this funding the Department of Administration provides three-year forgivable loans to rental property owners, in low-income neighborhoods, for abatement activities. The state of Wisconsin does not provide any state money for landlord lead abatement activities.

28

Identify and care for lead-poisoned children –

This goal speaks to the need to identify children through screening. As previously discussed in this essay, even though Medicaid requires the screening of young children for lead poisoning, less then half of Wisconsin children who receive MA were screened in 2001. Clearly, stricter enforcement by the Medicaid Program is needed. Currently, HMOs in Wisconsin are not financially penalized for failure to meet their contractual obligation of screening 85 percent of one and two year olds. Under MA, providers are obligated to meet an 80 percent screening rate of MA kids for Health Check. If these goals are not met, the state MA program can recoup the funding. However, no such financial incentives exist for lead screening alone. Wisconsin has developed a model for matching children enrolled in MA with lead poisoning testing data. This matching of data has the potential to pinpoint where children are receiving appropriate health services and where they are not. To assure, in the future, that all children are screened for the possibility of lead poisoning, the legislature should institute general screening for all children entering daycare, preschool or kindergarten.[14]

To assure, in the future, that all children are screened for the possibility of lead poisoning, the legislature should institute general screening for all children entering daycare, preschool or kindergarten.

Conduct Research –

The report recommends improving prevention strategies and promoting innovative ways to drive down the cost of lead hazard control.

Measure progress and refine lead poisoning prevention strategies –

Implement monitoring and surveillance programs.

Many low income families already face the challenge of securing affordable housing in neighborhoods where their children are safe outside their homes – they should not have to fear for their safety indoors as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ms. Cranley is the KidsCount coordinator for the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SOURCES:

[1] Monheit, Monteit, Silverman & Fodera Attorneys at Law, "Lead Paint Poisoning of Children", www.civilrights.com.

[2] "Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Federal Strategy Targeting Lead Paint Hazards", President's Task Force on Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children, February, 2000

[3] National Lead Information Center, "About Lead Poisoning", United States Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/lead

[4] Center for Disease Control, "Preventing Lead Poisoning in Young Children" www.cdc.gov. "Blood Levels in Young Children – United States and Selected States, 1996 – 1999", December 22, 2000

[5] National Lead Information Center, "About Lead Poisoning", United States Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/lead

[6] LaFlash, Susan. Joosse-Coons, Margie. Havlena, Jeffrey. Anderson, Henry. " Wisconsin Children at Risk for Lead Poisoning", *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, pgs. 18-22, November 2000.

[7] ibid

[8] Wisconsin State Statutes, Section 632.895 (10).

[9] Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, www.leadsafe.org

[10] Data from unpublished reports by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

[11] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, www.hud.gov/offices/lead

[12] Legislative Fiscal Bureau, 2001-2003 Informational Paper number 81, Shannon, Pam, "Recent Changes in Wisconsin Laws Relating to Lead-Bearing Paint Hazards", Wisconsin Legislative Council Legal Memorandum, August 2, 2000

[13] "Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Federal Strategy Targeting Lead Paint Hazards", President's Task Force on Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children, February, 2000

[14] Thanks to Amy Murphy of the City of Milwaukee Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and Marjorie Coons of the State Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for their assistance.

County Data

In this section, we have included county specific data to provide local context to the previous essays.

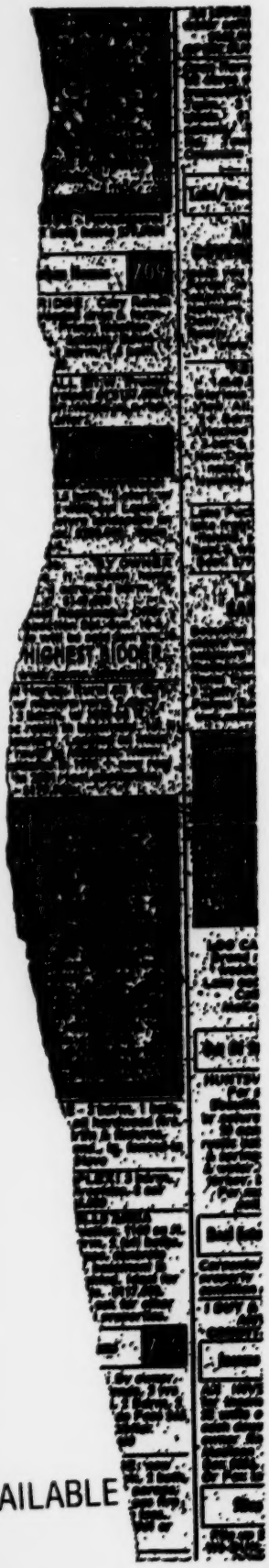
Data for 1990-1999 on child population, median family income, fair market rent and hourly wage needed to afford fair market rent are available in our *2000* and *2001 Wishkids Count* books. Contact us at: *www.wccf.org*.

As always, readers should exercise the usual caution when making inter-county comparisons or when comparing particular counties with the state. Differences may be the result of a particular phenomenon in an individual county. In addition, when looking at trends in data, caution must be used when drawing conclusions from a relatively small number of incidents.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

County	2000 Child Population	Renters 1990	Renters 2000	% Change in Renters	Home Owners 2000
WISCONSIN	**1,368,756**	**606,794**	**658,183**	**8.47%**	**68.4%**
Adams	3,883	1,113	1,161	4.31%	85.3%
Ashland	4,284	1,839	1,967	6.96%	70.7%
Barron	11,380	4,090	4,326	5.77%	75.8%
Bayfield	3,700	1,168	1,080	-7.53%	82.6%
Brown	59, 123	24,857	30,197	21.48%	65.4%
Buffalo	3,461	1,270	1,297	2.13%	76.5%
Burnett	3,465	1,010	1,026	1.58%	84.5%
Calumet	11,619	2,514	2,916	15.99%	80.4%
Chippewa	14, 602	4,914	5,196	5.74%	75.7%
Clark	10,038	2,382	2,266	-4.87%	81.2%
Columbia	13,221	4,566	5,141	12.59%	74.8%
Crawford	4,512	1,525	1,552	1.77%	76.8%
Dane	96,255	63,965	73,589	15.05%	57.6%
Dodge	21,263	7,221	8,350	15.63%	73.4%
Door	6,172	2,266	2,434	7.41%	79.4%
Douglas	10,202	4,984	5,104	2.41%	71.3%
Dunn	9,305	4,016	4,437	10.48%	69.1%
Eau Claire	21,820	11,120	12,527	12.65%	65.0%
Florence	1,164	301	305	1.33%	85.7%
Fond du Lac	24,489	9,217	9,991	8.40%	72.9%
Forest	2,536	760	855	12.50%	78.9%
Grant	11.768	5,241	5,120	-2.31%	72.3%
Green	8,908	3,538	3,463	-2.12%	73.8%
Green Lake	4,614	1,790	1,753	-2.07%	77.2%
Iowa	6,171	2,035	2,115	3.93%	75.9%
Iron	1,334	541	594	9.80%	80.7%
Jackson	4,603	1,706	1,773	3.93%	74.9%
Jefferson	18,657	7,055	7,987	13.21%	71.7%
Juneau	6,182	1,990	2,233	12.21%	77.0%
Kenosha	40,502	14,661	17,341	18.28%	69.1%
Kewaunee	5,217	1,296	1,386	6.94%	81.8%
La Crosse	25,261	13,619	14,532	6.70%	65.1%
Lafayette	4,389	1,614	1,398	-13.38%	77.5%
Langlade	5,057	1,701	1,779	4.59%	79.0%
Lincoln	7,541	2,408	2,559	6.27%	78.2%
Manitowoc	21,101	7,864	7,865	0.001%	76.0%

County	Median Family Income	Fair Market Rent 2001 (2 BRM)	Hourly Wage 2000	Children Who Are Lead Poisoned - 2001	
				1 & 2 Yr. Old	1 & 2 MA
WISCONSIN	$4,933	$586	$11.26	7.5%	10.5%
Adams	$3,250	$432	$8.31	1.9%	2.4%
Ashland	$3,367	$432	$8.31	6.2%	6.3%
Barron	$3,467	$432	$8.31	2.0%	2.6%
Bayfield	$3,225	$432	$8.31	3.1%	4.2%
Brown	$4,975	$563	$10.83	4.4%	5.6%
Buffalo	$4,483	$432	$8.31	2.6%	4.3%
Burnett	$3,233	$432	$8.31	3.4%	3.6%
Calumet	$4,883	$526	$10.12	4.7%	6.3%
Chippewa	$4,133	$518	$9.96	1.1%	1.0%
Clark	$3,533	$432	$8.31	1.4%	2.3%
Columbia	$4,467	$453	$8.71	4.5%	5.2%
Crawford	$3,267	$432	$8.31	5.6%	5.1%
Dane	$5,650	$699	$13.44	2.6%	3.3%
Dodge	$4,567	$490	$9.42	5.4%	7.9%
Door	$3,792	$446	$8.58	4.1%	5.8%
Douglas	$4,242	$487	$9.37	6.0%	9.3%
Dunn	$4,042	$443	$8.52	2.6%	3.3%
Eau Claire	$4,133	$518	$9.96	2.3%	3.4%
Florence	$3,192	$432	$8.31	0.0%	0.0%
Fond du Lac	$4,500	$541	$10.40	4.2%	6.1%
Forest	$3,067	$432	$8.31	0.9%	1.4%
Grant	$4,092	$432	$8.31	2.9%	3.7%
Green	$4,392	$432	$8.31	3.7%	5.4%
Green Lake	$4,067	$432	$8.31	5.5%	4.0%
Iowa	$5,092	$432	$8.31	7.2%	9.7%
Iron	$3,483	$432	$8.31	0.0%	0.0%
Jackson	$2,967	$432	$8.31	2.6%	2.5%
Jefferson	$4,800	$499	$9.60	4.7%	4.9%
Juneau	$3,467	$432	$8.31	3.6%	2.8%
Kenosha	$4,742	$650	$12.50	6.7%	8.7%
Kewaunee	$4,442	$432	$8.31	3.4%	5.4%
La Crosse	$4,283	$489	$9.40	2.8%	2.7%
Lafayette	$3,867	$432	$8.31	8.4%	6.0%
Langlade	$3,400	$432	$8.31	2.2%	2.6%
Lincoln	$3,983	$432	$8.31	2.7%	5.0%
Manitowoc	$4,742	$432	$8.31	4.5%	6.1%



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

County	2000 Child Population	Renters 1990	Renters 2000	% Change in Renters	Home Owners 2000
WISCONSIN	**1,368,756**	**606,794**	**658,183**	**8.47%**	**68.4%**
Marathon	33,716	10,493	11,611	10.65%	75.7%
Marinette	10,201	3,509	3,634	3.56%	79.3%
Marquette	3,335	938	1,061	13.11%	82.3%
Menominee	1,776	384	353	-8.07%	73.8%
Milwaukee	247,825	178,827	178,977	0.08%	52.6%
Monroe	11,498	3,573	4,045	13.21%	73.7%
Oconto	9,160	2,079	2,381	14.53%	83.0%
Oneida	8,203	2,862	3,120	9.01%	79.7%
Outagamie	44,527	14,020	16,700	19.12%	72.4%
Ozaukee	21,931	6,579	7,314	11.17%	76.3%
Pepin	1,909	616	561	-8.93%	79.7%
Pierce	8,997	3,227	3,501	8.49%	73.1%
Polk	10,835	2,891	3,217	11.28%	80.2%
Portage	16,177	6,322	7,290	15.31%	70.9%
Price	3,770	1,232	1,264	2.60%	80.7%
Racine	50,951	20,181	20,815	3.14%	70.6%
Richland	4,512	1,851	1,833	-0.97%	74.2%
Rock	40,366	16,641	16,914	1.64%	71.1%
Rusk	3,803	1,424	1,300	-8.71%	78.7%
Sauk	17,617	4,898	5,780	18.01%	73.3%
Sawyer	14,371	1,400	1,520	8.57%	77.1%
Shawano	3,901	3,161	3,445	8.98%	78.2%
Sheboygan	10,433	11,476	12,467	8.64%	71.4%
St. Croix	28, 775	4,426	5,529	24.92%	76.4%
Taylor	5,332	1,415	1,462	3.32%	80.6%
Trempeleau	6,844	2,562	2,788	8.82%	74.1%
Vernon	7,696	2,317	2,266	-2.20%	79.1%
Vilas	4,345	1,515	1,650	8.91%	81.8%
Walworth	22,654	9,153	10,674	16.62%	69.1%
Washburn	3,815	1,294	1,265	-2.24%	80.8%
Washington	31,330	8,594	10,525	22.47%	76.0%
Waukesha	94,903	24,062	31,856	32.39%	76.4%
Waupaca	13,277	4,076	4,576	12.27%	77.0%
Waushara	5,444	1,500	1,538	2.53%	83.5%
Winnebago	37,343	17,793	19,586	10.08%	68.0%
Wood	19,385	7,346	7,750	5.50%	74.3%

County	Median Family Income	Fair Market Rent 2001 (2 BRM)	Hourly Wage 2000	Children Who Are Lead Poisoned - 2001	
				1 & 2 Yr. Old	1 & 2 MA
WISCONSIN	$4,933	$586	$11.26	7.5%	10.5%
Marathon	$4,608	$509	$9.79	6.1%	7.9%
Marinette	$3,400	$432	$8.31	3.2%	3.0%
Marquette	$3,325	$432	$8.31	0.9%	1.4%
Menominee	$1,983	$432	$8.31	0.6%	0.9%
Milwaukee	$5,342	$658	$12.65	14.1%	19.0%
Monroe	$3,967	$432	$8.31	5.5%	5.1%
Oconto	$3,358	$432	$8.31	2.3%	2.8%
Oneida	$3,700	$432	$8.31	1.1%	1.9%
Outagamie	$4,883	$526	$10.12	2.6%	3.3%
Ozaukee	$5,342	$658	$12.65	3.1%	1.6%
Pepin	$3,825	$432	$8.31	0.0%	0.0%
Pierce	$6,283	$862	$16.58	3.0%	2.4%
Polk	$4,033	$439	$8.44	5.3%	6.9%
Portage	$4,592	$484	$9.31	1.1%	0.5%
Price	$3,600	$432	$8.31	6.9%	7.1%
Racine	$5,142	$585	$11.25	6.6%	9.7%
Richland	$3,708	$432	$8.31	7.5%	9.6%
Rock	$4,833	$578	$11.12	7.2%	8.1%
Rusk	$3,033	$432	$8.31	5.3%	6.6%
Sauk	$4,158	$468	$9.00	6.8%	9.2%
Sawyer	$3,025	$432	$8.31	1.8%	2.3%
Shawano	$3,958	$432	$8.31	3.7%	4.6%
Sheboygan	$4,925	$504	$9.69	8.9%	10.6%
St. Croix	$6,283	$862	$16.58	1.1%	1.8%
Taylor	$3,892	$432	$8.31	2.7%	3.8%
Trempeleau	$3,900	$432	$8.31	1.0%	1.7%
Vernon	$3,417	$432	$8.31	5.0%	7.3%
Vilas	$3,308	$432	$8.31	1.0%	1.2%
Walworth	$4,950	$553	$10.63	5.1%	8.6%
Washburn	$3,317	$432	$8.31	3.6%	5.6%
Washington	$5,342	$658	$12.65	2.2%	3.4%
Waukesha	$5,342	$658	$12.65	3.5%	5.3%
Waupaca	$4,500	$432	$8.31	5.7%	5.5%
Waushara	$3,683	$432	$8.31	5.7%	5.5%
Winnebago	$4,883	$526	$10.12	5.7%	7.7%
Wood	$4,708	$447	$8.60	3.2%	3.8%

35 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Data Sources

State and County Child Population (2000):

Data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates Program.
Web address: www.census.gov

Median Family Income (2001):

Data for 2001 are from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
Web address: www.huduser.org.

Fair Market Rent (2001):

Data for 2001 are from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Web address: www.huduser.org. FMRs are gross rent estimates; they include shelter rent and the cost of utilities, except telephone. The level at which FMRs are set is expressed as a percentile point within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units. The current definition used is the 40th percentile rent, the dollar amount below which 40 percent of standard quality rental housing unitís rent. The 40th percentile rent is drawn from the distribution of rents of units, which are occupied by recent movers (renter households who moved into their unit within the past 15 months). Newly built units less than two years old are excluded, and adjustments have been made to correct for the below market rents of public housing units included in the data base.

Full Time Hourly Wage needed as 30% of Income (2001):

This indicator attempts to show the amount of hourly wage a full-time worker would need to make in a specific county to keep their housing costs at 30 percent of their income, the generally accepted standard for affordability established by Congress and HUD. This dollar amount calculation was based on a 40-hour workweek for 52 weeks of the year. (Method: Divide income needed to afford the FMR for a unit with the specified number of bedrooms (1BR: $15,000) by 52 (weeks per year) ($15,000 / 52 = $288.46). Then divide by 40, for the number of hours per work week ($288.46 / 40 = $7.21).) Data from Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity, National Low Income Housing Coalition. We address: www.nlihc.org

Renters 1990 & 2000 & Percent change

Data from Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity, National Low Income Housing Coalition. Web address: www.nlihc.org

Home Owners (2000)

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Web address: www.census.gov, or http://quickfacts.census.gov.

Lead Levels (2001)

Data for children tested in Wisconsin are from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Public Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program unpublished reports.

2002 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVELS								
Group Size	Hourly*	Annual	Monthly					
			100%	115%	130%	150%	185%	200%
One	$4.26	$8,860	$738	$849	$959	$1,107	$1,365	$1,476
Two	$5.74	$11,940	$995	$1,144	$1,294	$1,493	$1,841	$1,990
Three	$7.22	$15,020	1,252	$1,440	$1,628	$1,878	$2,316	$2,504
Four	$8.70	$18,100	$1,508	$1,734	$1,960	$2,262	$2,790	$3,016
Five	$10.18	$21,180	$1,765	$2,030	$2,295	$2,648	$3,265	$3,530
Six	$11.66	$24,260	$2,022	$2,325	$2,629	$3,033	$3,741	$4,044
For each add'l person, add:	$1.48	$3,080	$257	$296	$334	$386	$475	$514

* assumes a full-time job for a full year (2,080 hours)

Note: Significance of Indicated Poverty Guidelines:
115% is the maximum income level for participation in W-2.
130% is the maximum income for the food stamp program.
150% is the income level at which premiums are first required for BadgerCare.
185% is the income level for entering the child care, Healthy Start and BadgerCare programs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES

An Informed Vision • A Trusted Voice

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families serves as Wisconsin's leading voice of, and premiere advocate for, children throughout the state.

Emphasizing the core values of fairness, caring, and community, the Council conducts a variety of advocacy activities, including organizing expert research, educating the public, supporting key issues and legislation, and coordinating grassroots activity in communities all across Wisconsin.

In addition to publishing the *WisKids Count Data Book* – which seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children – the Council accomplishes its advocacy through several publications; educational conferences throughout the state; and key projects like the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour, W-2 Watch, the Wisconsin Budget Project, and Advocacy Camp among others.

www.wccf.org

MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is a statewide, multi-issue child advocacy organization. It works to improve the well being of children and families by advocating for effective health, education, justice and human service programs that are accessible and equitable for children.

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON
CHILDREN
&FAMILIES
An Informed Vision • A Trusted Voice

16 North Carroll Street • Suite 600 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 284-0580 • FAX: (608) 284-0583 • www.wccf.org

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

EFF-089 (3/2000)

PS030295